



A constellation of
ideas -- working
with and growing
your ADHD teen.

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What is ADHD?

What looks like ADHD but isn't?

Sleep disorders, Autism, Sensory Processing disorder, Low blood sugar, bipolar, hearing problems, kids being kids.

ADHD in Teen years

- In adolescence, some symptoms of ADHD, particularly those related to hyperactivity, can become more subtle.
- Things such as poor school performance, may intensify when they are teens due to increased demands and expectations for independent functioning.
- Some of the more pronounced symptoms in teens with ADHD are related to deficits in executive functioning, the brain's ability to prioritize and manage thoughts and actions.
- Teens with ADHD may have difficulty foreseeing longer-term consequences for actions, plan accordingly, evaluate progress and shift plans as necessary.
- Those with ADHD may also exhibit lower tolerance for frustration, have emotional responses that are in excess of what is expected or appear more emotionally immature than their same-aged peers.

Parenting interventions:

Research points out 4 key problems of parenting ADHD kids:

All talk, no action.

Parents yell, scream, argue, and threaten, but do not follow through with consequences.

Letting teens set the tone.

If the teen is calm and respectful, so is the parent. If the teen complains or acts up, the parent follows suit.

Adopting a “whatever” attitude.

If a parent is tired of getting into snarls, she disengages. Born from letting teens set the tone, this is a poor way to deal with important issues.

Using inconsistent discipline.

Parents use harsh or extreme disciplinary measures erratically, mainly when they've had enough.

More parenting tips:

Test different discipline approaches. Walk the line between being too strict and too lenient. Use problem-solving and negotiation to give your teen input and responsibility. Try a strategy, evaluate, and redesign as needed.

Don't talk too much. Let emotions calm down before speaking with your teen. Always listen more than you speak. Be brief and be gone.

Communicate with your partner. Both parents should be on the same discipline page, and each should support the other. This stops the teen from manipulation and from pitting parents against each other.

Plan ahead. Know which issues matter most and are non-negotiable. Discuss them and your expectations — and have preset consequences.

More parenting tips:

“I’ll think about it.” These four little words move the discussion from the “have to have an answer right away” mode.

Ignore minor issues. Homes become combat zones when parents complain to the teen about everything.

Don’t beat a dead horse. If your teen has already paid for his misdeed or screw-up (lost his new digital camera, say) or has been disciplined by a teacher or the police, ask yourself, “Is another consequence needed, or am I ticked off and out for vengeance?”

Don’t take arguments personally. Ignore your teen’s “you don’t trust me” protests. Monitoring is a parent’s job. Expect flak — and don’t take it to heart.

More parenting tips:

Network. To know what's going on in your teen's world, step into it. Go to school events and talk with other parents. Get involved in their activities like band or soccer.

Show your love. When your teen walks through the door, do you bark or smile? Let your eyes fill with light, and make your words loving. Put problems on the back burner.

Work with your teen to help them pick apart what went wrong. Practice playing back the the tape and playing it forward. Be a consultant with them. When working with kids on ADHD, work as a consultant with them, not a manager. Let them backtrack through things and see where things fell apart. Debug the code. If they are resistant. Find people that are neutral parties that can help with this.

Rules and Regulations. Less is more. *Teenagers need autonomy* - stay up late, clean their room, etc. They respect your rules when they feel heard and respected. A trusting relationship relationship between parent and teen is invaluable.

Interventions: Mindfulness

Tip: You can't force self-discipline. Mindfulness can help to build awareness though.

Everyday mindfulness: I would also suggest working on mindfulness and trying it on small things: eating, washing dishes, textures, folding clothes, and some short format meditations at home.

Apps that help mindfulness: Calm, Headspace, Insight timer

Interventions: Sleep

Sleep:

Sleep is one of the most common battles I see for teenagers. A sleep deprived brain with or without ADHD is more likely to make mistakes on a test or on anything that checks functioning.

Tests on people who slept less than six hours a night for a week revealed substantial changes in the activity of genes that govern the immune system, metabolism, sleep and wake cycles, and the body's response to stress, suggesting that poor sleep could have a broad impact on long-term wellbeing.

The changes, which affected more than 700 genes, may shed light on the biological mechanisms that raise the risk of a host of ailments, including heart disease, diabetes, obesity, stress and depression, in people who get too little sleep.

Kids need to practice good sleep hygiene. This can be things like getting them an alarm clock and not having their cell phone charge next to their bed. Taking a hot shower 90 minutes before bed. Drinking milk. Reading a book. Going to bed or getting in bed at the same time every night.

Interventions: Diet

Diet:

Food is the fuel for our bodies and mind. Dietitians and psychiatrists suggest a well-balanced diet, including vegetables, complex carbohydrates, fruits, and plenty of protein. Foods rich in protein — lean beef, pork, poultry, fish, eggs, beans, nuts, soy, and low-fat dairy products — can have beneficial effects on ADHD symptoms. Protein-rich foods are used by the body to make neurotransmitters, the chemicals released by brain cells to communicate with each other. Protein can prevent surges in blood sugar, which increase hyperactivity. Make sure they have snacks they can easily bring with them during the day like Larabars.

Interventions: Exercise

Exercise is essential for kids and adults with ADHD:

When you exercise, your brain releases chemicals called neurotransmitters, including dopamine, which help with attention and clear thinking. People with ADHD often have less dopamine than usual in their brain.

Interventions: Exercise

Fitness can have the following benefits for adults with ADHD:

- Ease stress and anxiety.
- Improve impulse control and reduce compulsive behavior.
- Enhance working memory.
- Improve executive function. That's the set of skills needed to plan, organize, and remember details.
- Increase levels of brain-derived neurotrophic factor. That's a protein involved in learning and memory. It's in short supply in people with ADHD.
- Stay at a healthy weight. That's important because evidence suggests that people with ADHD are more likely to become obese.
- Reduce your risk of heart disease, diabetes, and certain types of cancer.
- Keep your blood pressure and cholesterol levels in a normal range.
- Strengthen your bones.
- Improve your mood and self-esteem.

How do people with ADHD learn?

- Do they learn at home or in groups?
- Does using the Pomodoro technique work?
- Music without words (Calm or Headspace)
- In their bedroom, in the kitchen, or at a coffee shop?
- Do frequent breaks help?
- Does standing help?
- Don't go EAST (everything at the same time) start with a small chunk.
- 45 minutes a day for 4 days or cramming (hint, cramming doesn't work) and sleep helps you replay the material in your mind. (tip: using essential oils in study space and by bed)
- They chose what distracts and see if they are right.
- Take 10-15 minutes before bed to review what you learned or review notes daily.
- Use breaks like walking the dog or shooting hoops.
- Power nap of 20 minutes but no more than 30 or interferes with sleep.
- Sipping a sugary drink increases glucose and focus.

Pro's and Con's of medicine

Pro -

- It has the potential to help kids try new ways of doing things.
- Kids must learn to struggle on their own and build other skills.

Con -

- Kids take a powerful medication and mix it with other substances.
- Kids take too much. It's a gateway to other drugs.
- It can affect their ability to socialize (they pull back) and it can affect their appetite.
- They can take it at the wrong time and have insomnia.
- Kids never learn other skills to help them better manage their brains.
- Kids learn the medication helps them and don't build confidence in their abilities.

Won't they just outgrow it?

ADHD tends to be with people for their life but they may adjust differently to features. The hyperactive child may become a musician, chef, actor, athlete, salesman, entrepreneur, or something that utilizes their high motor.

The inattentive type may develop better systems and have partners at work and home that help them to improve processes.

The biggest concern is self esteem. Negative self esteem is toxic and can really be damaging in the long term to kids and adults. This can mean kids become adults with a strong shame response and they won't take risks or they will get in trouble because of this negative core self belief. Very often these are the kids I find that numb out through pot.

Odd's and Ends

- Fidget toys can be helpful (ask your teens).
- Standing or taking breaks during class can help.
- People with ADHD gravitate towards high stress to pop themselves to do stuff.
- Adolescent brain develops till 25-30 years old.
- In the 80's there was an 800% increase in ADHD diagnosis (most not ADHD).
- Counseling and coaching can help. (Example of coaching)
- Segment intending - visualize how you would like for it to turn out.
- Humor, resourcing, pods of support, and imagination are critical.

Reading

Scattered Minds - The origins and healing of ADHD by Gabor Mate

Driven to Distraction - Edward Hallowell

Delivered from Distraction - Edward Hallowell

The Explosive Child - Ross Green

Positive Discipline - Jane Nelsen

The Yes Brain - Dan Siegel

Thank you & Questions

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